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1           5.       A system according to Claim 1, wherein the connection-oriented  
2 network protocol comprises the Transmission Control Protocol (TCP).

1           6.       A system according to Claim 1, wherein the intermediary device  
2 comprises at least one of a firewall and a boundary controller.

1           7.       A method for negotiating multi-path connections between a  
2 plurality of intermediary devices in a networked computing environment,  
3 comprising:

4               establishing a client-side connection between a requesting client and an  
5 intermediary device available from a plurality of intermediary devices on a  
6 primary communications channel in accordance with a connection-oriented  
7 network protocol;

8               establishing a server-side connection between the intermediary device and  
9 the requested server on a primary communications channel in accordance with the  
10 connection-oriented network protocol;

11              determining differences in connection parameters defined for the client-  
12 side connection and the server-side connection; and

13              communicating the connection parameter differences to at least one other  
14 such intermediary device over an out-of-band communications channel.

1           8.       A method according to Claim 7, further comprising:

2               communicating a service request initially received from the requesting  
3 client to the at least one other such intermediary device while establishing the  
4 client-side connection over the out-of-band communications channel.

1           9.       A method according to Claim 7, further comprising:

2               deferring communicating the connection parameter differences for  
3 transitory connections.

1           10.     A method according to Claim 7, wherein the out-of-band  
2     communications channel comprises at least one of a broadcast, multicast, or  
3     point-to-point channel.

1           11.     A method according to Claim 7, wherein the connection-oriented  
2     network protocol comprises the Transmission Control Protocol (TCP).

1           12.     A computer-readable storage medium holding code for performing  
2     the method of Claim 7.

1           13.     A system for communicating routing information between a  
2     plurality of link layer intermediary devices in a networked computing  
3     environment, comprising:  
4             a link layer intermediary device available from a plurality of link layer  
5     intermediary devices receiving a session packet from a requesting client;  
6             an encapsulation module generating an echo request packet identified as  
7     originating from the requesting client and addressed to a requested server and  
8     encapsulating the session packet within the echo request packet;  
9             the link layer intermediary device forwarding the echo request packet to  
10    the requested server;  
11            at least one other such link layer intermediary device receiving an echo  
12    response packet from the requested server;  
13            an unencapsulation module unencapsulating session packet from within  
14    the echo response packet and retrieving routing information from the session  
15    packet; and  
16            the least one other such link layer intermediary device forwarding a  
17    response packet to the requesting client.

1           14.     A system according to Claim 13, wherein the echo request packet  
2     is an Internet Control Message Protocol (ICMP) echo request packet and the echo  
3     response packet is an ICMP echo response packet.

